

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES

January 19, 2021

Virtual Meeting

Chairman Brett A. Simas; Selectman Maureen Dwinnell; Selectman Stephen A. Matellian; Town Manager, Derek S. Brindisi; Executive Assistant, Sandra Hakala

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order concerning imposition on strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, meetings in the Town of Upton are being conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings as provided for in the Order.

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order concerning imposition on strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, meetings in the Town of Upton will be conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. We will strive to provide access to such meetings via a link to call in, or other similar option. In the event we are unable to accommodate the same, despite best efforts, we will post recorded sessions of the meeting as soon as possible following the same.

As a preliminary matter, this is Brett Simas – Chair, Board of Selectmen. Permit me to confirm that all members and persons anticipated on the agenda are present and can hear me.

- Members, when I call your name, please respond in the affirmative. *Stephen Matellian, aye, Maureen Dwinnell, aye,*
- Staff, when I call your name, please respond in the affirmative. Derek Brindisi, Town Manager aye, *State each staff members' name.*
- Anticipated Speakers on the Agenda, please respond in the affirmative. *None*

Approval of Meeting Minutes - December 15, January 5

Passed over.

Guest Presentations

Representative David Muradian- State House Update

Representative David Muradian gave an overview of the State's budget process and other areas of interest to the Town.

- Reviewed grants opportunities pursuant to downtown revitalization, state traffic safety information system improvement, MassWorks, federal programs to provide additional funds for families, small businesses, housing assistance emergency rental and mortgage assistance
- Covid vaccines and roll-out
- Earmark of \$15,000 for public health and safety improvements
- Potential for bond bills
- Massachusetts is projected to get about \$9 billion from the Federal Stimulus Bill

- Unrestricted general government aid potentially 3.5%

Mr. Matellian asked for a definitive idea on the Rte. 140 Mass OT project. Mr. Brindisi responded they had developed two different options for the intersection of Grove and Main. That first choice being a very small roundabout and wanted some feedback from town officials in hopes of presenting this design 25% design at some type of public hearing sometime in the Spring.

Board of Health – COVID-19 Update

216 First responders from Upton, Sutton, Northbridge, Hopedale, Blackstone, Millville, and the Uxbridge Police Department received their first doses of the Moderna shot at Nipmuc Regional High School on January 12 and January 16. The next group of individuals scheduled to receive vaccines beginning February include seniors 75 years of age and older, teachers, certain individuals with increased risk to illness, among others.

Upton is still considered “high risk” due to the increase in cases over the last few weeks.

Board Discussion Items

FY 22 Budget Presentation

Kenny Costa, Finance Director/Town Accountant, presented the introduction of the FY2022 Town Manager’s Budget Recommendation Report.

The recommended budget is balanced and totals \$25.3 million; most operational line items are level funded and include a 1.5% cost of living increase to employees. Performance based increases and training were held.

- The budget is made up of approximately \$22.4 million in property taxes, local receipts totaling \$2.1 million, and \$766,000 in state aid.
- Chapter 70 funding was estimated at the same amount as last year totaling \$39,799.
- Municipal state aid, (i.e. unrestricted general government aid and elderly and veteran exemptions) were decreased by 10%
- Property tax revenue shows 2.5 percent automatic increase totaling \$532,880 versus the 2021 budget at \$508,727.
- New growth conservatively estimated at \$250,000 versus last year’s figure of \$457,420.
- Local receipts (includes motor vehicle excise, penalties and interest on taxes and excise, licenses, court fines, and fees) show an overall projected increase of \$46,978 for a total of \$2,089,422 for fiscal year 2022.

Expenses by department/function:

- Education - \$14.3 million
- Public safety - \$3.4 million
- Public works - \$2.5 million
- Employee benefits and other - \$2.3 million
- General government totaling - \$1.4 million
- Debt service - \$437,000,
- Health and human services - \$419,000,
- Culture and recreation - \$340,000

- State and county charges - \$60,000.

[Motion to Accept Donations to Council on Aging](#)

Motion #1: Motion made by Selectman Matellian to accept the following donations:

Neighbor to Neighbor Program

Steven and Eileen Rakitin \$1200

Walter and Marcia Priestley \$600

Food Pantry

Upton's Professional Firefighters Union L 5116 \$150

Stephen and Karleen Chase \$100

COA General Use

Collected by UniBank \$295 (In place of giving tree)

Second: Selectman Dwinnell, Unanimous, Chairman Simas

Brett Simas, aye, Maureen Dwinnell, aye, Steve Matellian, aye

Town Manager Report/Updates

- Many components of the Police Reform Bill effective July 1
- Upwards of 80% vaccination rate amongst us first responders in Town
- Town Planner is engaging with many in the community, attending affordable housing workshops, looking at many areas of opportunity to uncover resources and bring committees together, recently met with the President of the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce to begin discussions, hopefully for late spring or summer, to hold the business roundtable.

Closing Comments/Unanticipated Discussion Items (Board Members)

Adjourn Meeting

Motion #2: At 9:24 Selectman Dwinnell made motion to adjourn.

Brett Simas, aye, Maureen Dwinnell, aye, Steve Matellian, aye

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Hakala, Executive Assistant